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**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR  
NEW GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES  
FOR WOMEN**

Ontario Status of Women Council

June, 1982

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ontario Status of Women Council has been in operation since 1973 without major changes to the structure of the Council. However, in nine years, demands and expectations for Council services have increased dramatically.

In addition, women are increasingly requesting specific programs and services from ministries and agencies.

No structure exists within the government to co-ordinate the development of programs and/or the delivery of services to women. As well, it is not clear where the exact responsibility for women's issues falls within the Ontario Cabinet.

The Ontario Status of Women Council has proposed structural changes to the Council as well as the need for increased research and consultation funds.

The Council has also proposed that there be a clearer focus within Cabinet for women's issues and a structure for dealing with the development of women's policy issues.

## SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES

- THE POSITION OF CHAIRPERSON OF THE ONTARIO STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL SHOULD BECOME FULLTIME;
- WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER GROUPS SHOULD BE OFFERED THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SELECTION PROCESS FOR APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL;
- FUNDS FOR RESEARCH AND REGIONAL CONSULTATION SHOULD BE ADEQUATE TO FULFILL THE COUNCIL'S MANDATE;

- THERE SHOULD BE A CABINET COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND/OR A MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STATUS OF WOMEN. THE COMMITTEE SHOULD BE CHAIRED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUDE THE POLICY SECRETARIES - SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, RESOURCES AND JUSTICE, AS WELL AS THE MINISTER OF LABOUR, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.
- THE DEPUTY PROVINCIAL SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE THE SECRETARY TO THE CABINET COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND SHOULD CHAIR A DEPUTY MINISTER'S COMMITTEE ON WOMEN. THE DIRECTOR OF THE WOMEN'S BUREAU SHOULD CHAIR AN INTERMINISTERIAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE OF SENIOR POLICY ADVISORS ON WOMEN'S ISSUES. THE WOMEN'S BUREAU SHOULD BECOME THE OFFICE ON WOMEN WITHIN THE SECRETARIAT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT TO PROVIDE A "ONE-WINDOW" APPROACH FOR POLICY CO-ORDINATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR WOMEN.

## INTRODUCTION

The Ontario Status of Women Council believes that new initiatives are necessary if the Ontario Government is to realize its goal of equality for women.

## BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

The report responds to the "Sunset Review" which the Ontario Status of Women Council and the Provincial Secretary for Social Development were required to carry out prior to the scheduled "Sunsetting" of the Council in March 1982. The Sunset Review process requires the elimination of government agencies which are no longer necessary. The objective of the process is "to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in the contribution of (the Council) to the overall policy and program formulation process." The Ontario Status of Women Council welcomes the Sunset Review believing that the process will result in more responsible and effective government.

In December 1981, the Provincial Secretary reviewed the activities of the Ontario Status of Women Council and reported its findings to the Management Board of Cabinet. Management Board recommended that the Ontario Status of Women Council continue "without change" until March 31, 1984. The Council has recommended to the Provincial Secretary for Social Development that the Ontario Status of Women Council continue "with change". Changes proposed by the Ontario Status of Women Council follow.

## HISTORY

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women was set up in 1967 to "inquire into and report on the status of women in Canada, and to recommend what steps might be taken by the Federal government to ensure for women equal opportunities with men in all aspects of Canadian society." As part of the 1970 report, the Royal Commission suggested the creation of "... status of women council as a permanent body with a national scope and function." Similar organizations were recommended at the provincial level.

## HISTORY (Continued)

Ontario reviewed the recommendations of the Royal Commission and in 1973 produced a "green paper on women" endorsing the need for a provincial status of women council.

## MANDATE

The Ontario's Status of Women Council began in 1973 by Order-in-Council. The Council mandate follows:

"To advise the Government of Ontario, through the Provincial Secretary for Social Development, on matters pertaining to the status of women and without limiting the generality of the foregoing:

- a) to evaluate and monitor existing legislation, policies and programs related to the needs and status of women;
- b) to identify specific areas requiring the attention of government and to recommend legislation and program changes;
- c) to consult with groups, hold public meetings and issue position papers outlining alternative policies and specific issues with the purpose of stimulating public discussion;
- d) to respond to requests from the Provincial Secretary for Social Development and Ministries for advice and consultation on matters relating to women."

Council offers advice to government in reports, brief and letters, in appearances before Legislative Committees and in meetings with elected representatives and civil servants. The Council has advised government on the following subjects:

Aging  
Battered Women  
Change of Name  
Child care  
Contract Compliance  
Education  
Employment Strategies  
Family Law

### MANDATE (Continued)

Health  
Immigrant Women  
Non-traditional Occupations  
Pensions  
Recreation  
Sex Bias in Textbooks  
Sports  
Widow's Rights to Family Property  
Women with Special Needs For Monetary Security

The Council has been extremely responsible in providing practical advice. A Management Board Review found that 85% of Council's recommendations had been implemented or were still under active consideration.

### PURPOSE

Women's social and economic realities differ markedly from men's and will likely continue to do so for some time. An advisory council must ensure that these differing realities are considered in the formulation of policy and that there is adequate analysis of the impact of these policies on women.

Two members of the Ontario Cabinet are women. Six members of the Legislature are women and there is one female deputy minister. Until there are many more women in positions of responsibility throughout society, the advocacy role of the Ontario Status of Women Council is both necessary and appropriate. Council's purpose is to ensure that historical inequities are redressed aggressively and that the effects of future policies are ultimately fair to everyone as enshrined in the new Canadian constitution.

### BUDGET

Council's annual budget is \$155,000. Staff consists of three civil servants, an executive officer, an administrative officer and a secretary. Council's funds are administered by the Secretariat for Social Development and the Premier's Office using the Manual of Administration guidelines for public expenditure.

## STRUCTURE

The Council has 14 part time members including a part time chairperson and a vice-chairperson. Council reports annually to the Legislature through the Provincial Secretary for Social Development. Council meets four times a year and the Executive Committee meets in intervening months. The majority of the Council meetings are held in Toronto. Council has met outside Toronto, sometimes with the full Council and occasionally with a task force of three or four persons. Meetings have been held in Hamilton, St. Catharines, Timmins, Moosonee, Moose Factory, Cornwall and Sarnia. A meeting is planned for Kenora in 1983.

## REPRESENTATION: APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

Council members are appointed by the Premier in consultation with the Provincial Secretary for Social Development. Approximate geographic representation is maintained. The Council has had native, multicultural, and union members. Men and Francophones have been continually represented. Also, the past president of the Provincial Council of Women has a regular appointment.

Council believes that the majority of members should be experts in specific areas such as law, labour, education, health and social services. Members should be knowledgeable about the issues related to women in society, and must be committed to improving the status of women. Some members should have a history of involvement in women's issues and an understanding of the action needed to redress historical imbalances. Members should be prepared to expend the time and energy needed to achieve improved status for Ontario's four million women.

Recently, women's organizations have called for the Canadian Advisory Council on Women to be more "representative". The question we must deal with is whether an advisory council can be a replica of women in our complex society, and whether an advisory council should have representatives from the following groups.

REPRESENTATION: APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS (Continued)

Economic Status - sole support, homemakers, paid workers;

Interest Groups - Ontario Committee, Women's Institute, I.O.D.E., Junior League, Rape Crisis Centres;

Age Groups - youth, childbearing, middle age, pre-retirement, retirement;

Philosophical Persuasion - feminist, traditionalist, pro-choice, anti-choice;

Political Persuasion - party politics, issue politics;

Religious Groups - Christian, Non-Christian

Business Groups - Association of Women Executives, Business and Professional Women;

Sectoral Groups - civil servants, educators, volunteers;

Geographic Regions - north, central, east, west, rural, small town, urban;

Gender Representation - all women, some men;

Marital Status - single, married, divorced, widowed;

Expertise - professors, doctors, lawyers;

Arts - Sculptors, musicians, writers, dancers.

Obviously, complex representation on a formal appointed basis would be unwieldy and would lead to enormous competition for limited positions.

Past Council members have acted as "trustees" who act on behalf of women. Council works for women in the community, but is not and could not, even in miniature, be a replica of women in society. Through the Council, Ontario women can and do make representations to government. Council's "trust" is to provide a consultative process so that this representational process can occur with regularity and that through this process, all voices who speak on behalf of women can be heard.

Council hosts a two-day "Consultation" with presidents of women's organizations to bring important issues to the attention of women. The need for regular and systematic consultation with women through their organizations and in their communities cannot be over-stressed.

## COUNCIL ACTION

Energetic chairing by Laura Sabia, 1973 to 1976 and Lynne Gordon 1976 to 1982 created the unique and public profile of this government agency. It is assumed an invisible Council was not envisioned when two outspoken women who enjoyed excellent access to the media were appointed to lead the Council.

Following is a summary of Council Action.

### Information

- 10,000 individuals, women's organizations, Provincial and Federal Legislators, businesses, libraries and the media receive Council's "Status" newsletter. (In a recent survey, only four persons did not wish to continue receiving the newsletter)
- Governments, businesses, teachers and individuals use Council's reports, briefs and booklets.
- Students, and researchers from the public and private sector use Council's Resource Centre.
- Women receive advice, information and referral to appropriate agencies by Council members and staff.
- Staff provide background to the media on Council's policies.

### Advocacy

- Council provides advice and assistance to women in need.
- Council provides supporting letters for women's organizations.

### Public Speaking

- Council Chairperson makes an average of two speeches monthly and many media interviews. Council members regularly speak to women's organizations.

## COUNCIL ACTION (Continued)

### Joint Councils

- Ontario co-founded with Canada, Quebec and Saskatchewan, the Joint Status of Women Councils in 1975. The Joint Councils meet several times yearly. Ontario has fostered federal/provincial co-operation on women's issues and has consistently identified emerging issues.

### Legislation and Programs

- Council action accelerated reform of family law
- Council advice prompted refinements to the Family Law Reform Act and the new Ontario Human Rights Code
- Council's Talent Bank prompted further appointments of qualified women to government agencies (12.5% in 1975, 20.2% in 1981)
- Guidelines produced by Council are reducing stereotyping in textbooks

### Forecasting

- The Ontario Manpower Commission is preparing an Employment Strategy for Women partially in response to Council forecasting the need in 1979
- Family Benefits for elderly single women were recently raised, partially as a result of Council's forecasting the need for increased funds

### Attitudes

- Council's document "About Face: Towards a Positive Image of Women in Advertising" was instrumental in changing the advertising community's attitude toward women

We are confident that the Council's catalyst role has increased the rate of progress toward improving the status of women in Ontario.

## PROBLEM AREAS

### Appointments

- Appointments to Council are part time. However, the expectation and demands of the public on the Chairperson equate to a full-time position. Council Chairperson is expected to:
  - Provide continuing leadership and advice to government
  - Monitor existing legislation and make recommendations for improvements
  - Consult with women's organizations throughout the Province
  - Represent the Province at provincial, national and international functions
  - Be available at all times for statements to the media

Given the complexity, scope and numerical representation of women in Ontario society it is clear that Ontario should expand the role of Council Chairperson to a full-time position.

- In addition to the present system of making appointments to Council, women's organizations and other groups concerned with improving the status of women should be offered an opportunity to participate in the selection process by either nominating individuals or by assisting in the elaboration of the selection criteria that is used in the actual choice of which persons will be invited to serve as members of Council.

### Research

- The Council's research budget is \$15,000. While some issues are researched by Council members, most projects require consultants.

### PROBLEM AREAS (Continued)

A recent survey of Council members showed equal pay for work of equal value to be the top research priority. Council agreed to hire experts to develop a strategy for implementing equal pay for work of equal value. However, even a modest estimate for the project would have meant that no additional research projects could have been undertaken during that year. Consequently, the Council has been unable to proceed with its most important research project. Lack of adequate research funds has prevented the Council from fulfilling its mandate to advise the government. Research funds should be adequate to carry out the mandate of the Council.

### Regional Consultation

- . To fulfill the "trust" of representing women to the government, Council is committed to regional consultation with women. Adequate funding is necessary.

### PROPOSED CHANGES

- . THE POSITION OF CHAIRPERSON OF THE ONTARIO STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL SHOULD BECOME FULLTIME;
- . WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER GROUPS SHOULD BE OFFERED THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SELECTION PROCESS FOR APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL;
- . FUNDS FOR RESEARCH AND REGIONAL CONSULTATION SHOULD BE ADEQUATE TO FULFILL THE COUNCIL'S MANDATE;

### ONTARIO STRUCTURES

- . Ontario Status of Women Council

The Ontario Status of Women Council's present budget is \$155,000. It is staffed by three civil servants. The Council reports to the Legislature through the Provincial Secretary for Social Development.

## ONTARIO STRUCTURES (Continued)

### . Women's Bureau

The Women's Bureau was established in 1963 within the Ministry of Labour. It acts to improve the status of women in the workforce through research and public education and by preparing studies and policy recommendations relating to both legislation and enforcement for government consideration. The Women's Bureau has three major program areas: the Affirmative Action Consulting Service, Community Outreach, and Research and Information. It has a budget of \$606,000 and a staff of 19. In 1981, the Bureau opened an office in Thunder Bay to serve the needs of women in northern Ontario.

The Women's Bureau, because of its location in the Ministry of Labour, is situated within the Resources Policy Field of Cabinet and tends to be somewhat separated from many of the other social issues related to women which are funnelled through the Social Development Policy Field. While the Women's Bureau has prime responsibility only for those issues which relate to women in employment, from time to time the Bureau has responded to related issues such as workplace and daycare.

### . Women Crown Employees Office

The Women Crown Employees Office is also located within the Ministry of Labour and is the delivery system for the government's Affirmative Action Program for its almost 30,000 female employees. This is a decentralized program which co-ordinates the operations of affirmative action officers located in each ministry. Its budget is \$247,400, and it has a staff of 6 located in ministries and agencies. There are 35 affirmative action officers.

## ONTARIO STRUCTURES (Continued)

- Advisory Council on Equal Opportunity for Women

Another structure is the Advisory Council on Equal Opportunity for Women. This Council, established in 1979, is chaired by the Director of the Women's Bureau. Council members, representing business and labour, advise the Minister of Labour on the best methods to promote affirmative action for women. Its activities include: development of a Discussion Paper on Blocks and Barriers to Affirmative Action; a Tripartite Consultation on this paper; a luncheon with Chief Executive Officers hosted by the Minister of Labour; five regional meetings to promote discussion of affirmative action among all sectors of the community; a response to the Secondary Education Review Project; and assistance in the development and monitoring of a questionnaire to assess affirmative action activities on an annual basis. The Chairperson of the Ontario Status of Women Council is a member of the Council.

In addition to the formal government structures which exist for women many ministries and agencies provide services to women. The government has an explicit customer service policy. However, there is no understanding of the extent to which women, as a client group, are requesting services, or are being served by the government. Women receive services from many government ministries:

- the Employment Standards Branch of the Ministry of Labour investigates equal pay cases.
- the Ministry of Community and Social Services provides direct programs for family benefits mothers, women on welfare, and childcare.
- the Ministry of Education provides services to women through the development of bias free curricula.
- the Provincial Secretariat for Justice provides funds for rape crisis centres and also provides a Rape Evidence Kit to hospitals and police forces around the province.

## ALTERNATIVE PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL STRUCTURES

### Canada

The Federal government has designated a Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. The Office of the Co-ordinator of Women's Programs provides support services to the minister. The director of the Office has deputy minister status and co-ordinates programs relating to women across Federal departments. The budget for this program is \$1.6 million.

### Quebec

Quebec has a Cabinet Committee on Women comprised of the three policy field ministers in the social, resources and economic fields. The minister who chairs the Cabinet Committee is the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. The Secretary to the Cabinet Committee is a senior civil servant with deputy minister status who chairs an Inter-ministerial Policy Committee of Women's Issues. An annual report analyses each ministry's progress on policy related to women. The Quebec Council on the Status of Women has a budget of \$2.2 million. (Activities parallel to the Ontario's Women's Bureau are performed by the Council).

### New Brunswick

The New Brunswick Council reports to the Premier. The President is full time and has deputy minister status. The budget is \$174,000.

## WHAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE FOR WOMEN

- . Advocacy - There is a continuing need for the Ontario Status of Women Council until fairness governs the activities of men and women. Until more women are elected and their are more senior women in the public and private sector the continuing advocacy of the Ontario Status of Women Council is both necessary and appropriate.

WHAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE FOR WOMEN (Continued)

- Protection - Women are protected against discrimination on the basis of sex by the Ontario Human Rights Code. The Ombudsman serves all citizens. The Employment Standards Act ensures that women receive equal pay for substantially the same work (the Ontario Status of Women Council believes that this Act should be amended to include the principle of equal pay for work of equal value).
- Programs - Women are the principal beneficiaries of programs such as family benefits and childcare. In addition, women benefit from all government programs and services. Programs should be co-ordinated.
- Information and Referral - Employment information is provided by the Women's Bureau. The Ontario Status of Women Council provides information on all issues pertaining to women. Both the Women's Bureau and the Status of Women Council refer women to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the Employment Standards Branch of the Ministry of Labour, and the Ombudsman, etc. Services should be co-ordinated.
- Policy Co-ordination and Long Range Planning - At the present time, there is no formal mechanism for co-ordinating the development of policy relating to women within the Ontario government. Indeed, the government does not know the cumulative effect of its programs on women, and as pointed out before, it is not aware of the number of requests for service from women. There is a need to develop a mechanism which will ensure that policy relating to women is co-ordinated and integrated into the policy making structure of government.

## PROBLEM AREAS

### . Ministerial Responsibility

There is confusion regarding elected responsibility for women's issues within the Cabinet. Some people perceive the Provincial Secretariat for Social Development has responsibility for women's issues because the Ontario Status of Women Council reports to the Provincial Secretary for Social Development. Others perceive that the Minister of Labour has responsibility for women's issues because the Women's Bureau and the Women Crown Employees Office are located within the Ministry of Labour.

Although the Cabinet has the collective responsibility for the advancement of women's status in Ontario, the Ontario Status of Women Council believes that it is necessary to focus elected responsibility within the Cabinet so that women's groups can work directly with the Minister/s who have the responsibility for women's issues which affect them. The Council favours either a minister responsible for the status of women and/or a Cabinet Committee on Women similar to the Quebec model.

### . Policy Co-ordination

The Ontario government formally recognized women as a client group in the sixties. Women's services have increased since 1975, International Women's Year. Since that time, many ministries have begun to deliver programs to women.

No study has analysed the extent and nature of customer service to women. No structure exists to co-ordinate and ensure the compatibility of the government's policies for women with the programs that are delivered by each ministry. There is no central co-ordinating body which has the responsibility for ensuring that women, as a client group, are served efficiently and effectively by the government.

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## PROBLEM AREAS (Continued)

### Summary

- Women's issues need a clearer focus within the Cabinet.
- Women's issues need policy co-ordination.

## PROPOSED CHANGES

- THERE SHOULD BE A CABINET COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND/OR A MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STATUS OF WOMEN. THE COMMITTEE SHOULD BE CHAIRED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND INCLUDE THE POLICY SECRETARIES - SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, RESOURCES AND JUSTICE, AS WELL AS THE MINISTER OF LABOUR, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.
- THE DEPUTY PROVINCIAL SECRETARY FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE THE SECRETARY TO THE CABINET COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND SHOULD CHAIR A DEPUTY MINISTER'S COMMITTEE ON WOMEN. THE DIRECTOR OF THE WOMEN'S BUREAU SHOULD CHAIR AN INTERMINISTERIAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE OF SENIOR POLICY ADVISORS ON WOMEN'S ISSUES. THE WOMEN'S BUREAU SHOULD BECOME THE OFFICE ON WOMEN WITHIN THE SECRETARIAT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT TO PROVIDE A "ONE-WINDOW" APPROACH FOR POLICY CO-ORDINATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR WOMEN.

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